

California, Texas Take Top Prizes in Business Facilities' 2009 Ranking Report

Jack Rogers | 04-Jun-2009

TINTON FALLS, NJ - JUNE 3 - Perennial economic development leaders Texas and California flexed their muscles and emerged on top in several key categories of the 2009 *Business Facilities* Rankings Report. Texas was declared the winner of the coveted **Best Business Climate** ranking, which covers a range of critical development factors including cost of labor, incentives, infrastructure and tax climate.

The Lone Star State, which has continued to show solid growth even in a shrinking economy, edged out business-friendly South Dakota and Wyoming, and the emerging economic development powerhouse Utah, to grab the top spot.

"Texas really has its act together," *Business Facilities* Editor-in-Chief Jack Rogers said. "The state has developed a diverse group of growth sectors and it continues to bring in new business with a sensible tax structure and an attractive array of incentives."

Rogers added that *Business Facilities* was impressed by the level of cooperation between state government and business in developing growth opportunities in Texas. "It is a blueprint for success, and it makes them a fierce competitor in the battle for new jobs," he said.

California staked a claim to leadership in three key rankings categories that loom large as the national economy becomes greener and more technology-oriented, and infrastructure plays a greater role in business location decisions.

The Golden State blew away the competition and took the top ranking in **Biotechnology Strength**. It also was declared the **Greenest State** and emerged as the winner in a new category, **Best Transportation Infrastructure**.

"There is no denying that California continues to be the center of the biotech universe," Rogers noted. "The size and strength of the state's university system, the scope of its specialized biotech employment, and the exponential growth of research centers in genomics and other fields put California in a position to maintain its lead for years to come."

For the 2009 **Greenest States** ranking, *Business Facilities* examined 15 criteria, including available financial incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy; the number of LEED-certified projects; the percentage change in fossil-fuel emissions; the percentage of commuters who travel to work on public transportation; the number of hazardous waste sites deleted from the national priority list; and the amount of electricity generated by renewable resources.

Business Facilities Co-President Ted Coene said he expects the **Greenest States** ranking to compete with **Best Business Climate** as the most coveted award in coming years.

"Sustainable development, green building and energy efficiency are much more than good civic policy--today they are requirements for growth," Coene said.

Vermont again grabbed the top ranking in the **Best Education Climate** category, beating back a strong challenge from New Jersey, which placed second. Minnesota and Massachusetts garnered the top rankings for **Educated Workforce**, which were divided this year into skilled (advanced degrees) and unskilled categories.

Washington was a surprise winner in the annual **Quality of Life** sweepstakes, while South Dakota topped the list in **Cost of Labor** and finished a close second to Wyoming in the competition for the **Best Business Tax Climate** ranking. Hawaii, meanwhile, took the top spot in a new category, **Workforce Health and Safety**.

The ongoing southward migration of the U.S. automotive industry was reflected in this year's tally for **Automotive Manufacturing Strength**. While Ohio managed to achieve the top ranking with its sizable combination of assembly plants and parts manufacturers, Tennessee, Kentucky, and South Carolina continued to improve their showing.

"Everyone knows it's been a very tough year for the U.S. auto industry," Rogers noted. "But this industry will not disappear, and the investments that states like Tennessee and South Carolina are making will ensure that they are among the automotive leaders of the future."

The full 2009 Rankings Report will be published in the July issue of *Business Facilities* magazine. The results also will be posted on www.businessfacilities.com. Jack Rogers 800-524-0337 x 290 - Email: jrogers@groupc.com



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